

MIGRANT WORKERS NEWSLETTER

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

December, 1959

MEETING COMPETITION AND GREED. Increased use of farm machinery - - and the U.S.-permitted starvation wages paid to imported farm workers (432,857 from Mexico in 1958) - - are blamed by returning migrants for this season's extremely low wages. Some Texas migrants complain that they nearly had to get down on their knees and beg for jobs. One worried father said:

"Alone, I cannot argue with the boss about wages - - or complain if my wife and children have to sleep on the cold floor of an un-screened shed or former chicken house."

"But, by organizing and standing together", he added, "I know that we can some day stand erect and demand a decent living wage for ourselves, our families and our neighbors. And, by standing together, we can do some straight talking to those Texas legislators who refused to pass even a 50¢ an hour minimum wage law."

RETURNING MIGRANTS are pleased to know that Chairman Jimmy R. Flores and other volunteer workers (no funds for salaries) are already busy arranging meetings where new members will be recruited, educational films shown - and where returning farm workers can compare notes on wages and working conditions and swap experiences with various employers and employers groups. As formerly, the meetings will be held in churches, schools, vacant lots and homes. Each meeting will be followed up with a house-to-house "signing up" canvass.

"THE EYES OF TEXAS" Texas farm workers are watching the current AFL-CIO organizing drive in California with much interest and great hope - - still hoping but no longer waiting. With living costs at a new high - and Texas farm wages at a new low, they know there is no time to lose. (Texas farm wages were the lowest in the entire nation - - and lower even than ten years ago.)

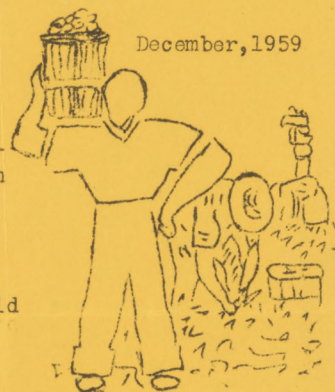
***** Texas farm workers fully realize that they have
 "But there is a future - * a tough job ahead - and that their problems are
 Don't get me wrong! * not going to be solved over-night. But they
 I'm not a singing * are not singing any give-up songs. They know
 any give-up song."(Don West)* that only by organizing and standing together, can
 ***** they hope to deal effectively with greedy employ-
 ers and overcome the lack of state and federal protective legislation.

They are tired of working for starvation wages - of seeing their loved one go hungry in a land of plenty - of seeing their children grow up without an education because, too often, it is a matter of having to choose between an education and family survival. They are tired of returning home season after season, too often without money, without jobs and without unemployment compensation benefits.

"LOVE THY NEIGHBOR" United Neighbors groups in East Texas are concentration on community information forums and Pay-your-poll tax meetings. This down-to-earth movement, composed largely of Negro sharecroppers, farm workers (including many migrants) and small farmers, is making a determined fight against discrimination and for equal rights and full citizenship. Sometimes they must work "with fear and violence at their side". In some communities, a surprising number of courageous white neighbors have joined them in their fight for justice. These oppressed fellow-Americans in that "deep south" section of our state need and deserve help and encouragement from all who believe in justice - and "daily bread".

 If you would like to help in this organizing drive, please contact us at the address given below - or call CA 3-8652. The volunteer workers need money for gasoline for their jalopies and other expenses. Any help will be much appreciated, and you may be sure that it will be sparingly and wisely used.

Address: Harry Koger, 637 Santa Clara Walk, San Antonio 3, Texas



*Dear Harry -
 we are getting some
 mighty sad stories from
 returning migrants. we hope
 every thing going well in
 Calif. and that you'll
 be in old Texas one
 of these days soon.
 Harry*